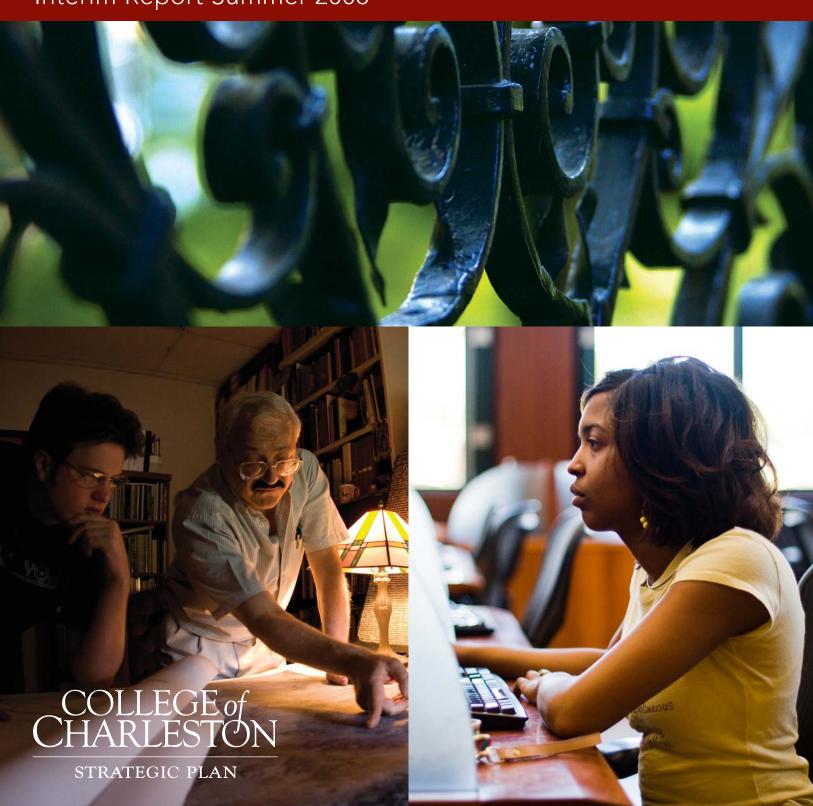
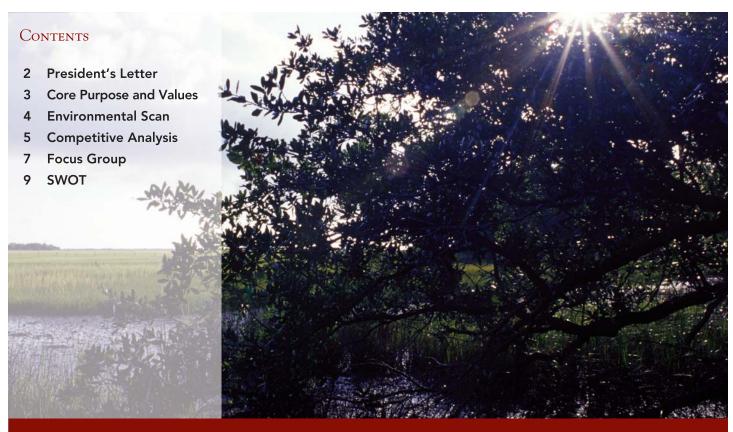


BUILDING BRIDGES TO THE FUTURE Strategic Planning Committee Interim Report Summer 2008





STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The College of Charleston's Strategic Planning Committee is working diligently to build a bridge from the College's impressive past to its promising future.

Co-Chairs

George Benson President

Jim Deavor Department Chair, Chemistry

Amy Thompson McCandless Dean of the Graduate School

Sue Sommer-Kresse Senior Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Planning

Members

Ray Barclay
Erin Beutel
Calvin Blackwell
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Environmental Analysis Subcommittee

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Competitive Analysis Subcommittee

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Focus Group Subcommittee

Co-Chairs Lisa Thomson Ross Marjorie Thomas

Ron Blankenship Daniel Crooks Niki DeWeese Meredith Gerber Elizabeth Kassebaum Cathy Mahon Sue Sommer-Kresse Debbie Vaughn

SWOT Subcommittee

(Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)

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Susan Anderson
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Bob Cape
Mike Haskins
Candace Jaruszewicz
Alex Kasman
Pam Niesslein
Sarah Owens
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DIXIE PLANTATION SUBCOMMITTEE

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Randy Beaver Henry Blackford Tim Ćallahan John Clarkin Carol Ann Davis Sara Davis Robert Freeman Gus Gustafson Maureen Havs Barney Holt Steve Osborne Herb Perker Amy Pierson Monica Scott Sue Sommer-Kresse Allan Strand Joe Weyers Jennifer Wilkie

As part of the College of Charleston's strategic planning process, a subcommittee is looking at possible research and educational opportunities at Dixie Plantation, an 862-acre nature preserve donated to the College Foundation by the late naturalist John Henry Dick.

P. George Benson, President



Interim Report Reveals Findings of Strategic Planning Research

We wanted to hear from you. We needed to hear from you. And, I'm pleased to say we did hear from you. Thank you for participating in our strategic planning process.

As you know, a campus-wide Strategic Planning Committee is in the process of developing a plan that will provide a vision for the future of the College of Charleston.

To date, with your help, the committee has accomplished the following:

- Developed draft statements of the core purpose and values of the College.
- Conducted focus group meetings with 289 individuals to solicit their ideas for improving the College. Participants included students, administrators, business and community leaders, legislators, alumni, faculty, and staff.
- Asked each of the 123 administrative and academic units of the College to determine strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT Analysis).
- Examined the external business, economic, academic, and political environments of the College in order to identify factors that might affect the College's future.
- Examined competing institutions to ascertain the nature of their programs and resources.

A summary of the findings thus far is included in this report. The College of Charleston will build upon these findings to develop a strategic plan that will provide carefully considered goals and objectives for the College as a whole, its individual Schools, and all the departments and units. The finished plan will define the College's priorities and lay the foundation for a successful, comprehensive capital campaign that will take us to new heights in educational excellence.

Please review this interim report and continue to give us your feedback. You may complete the feedback form on the strategic plan website at strategicplan.cofc.edu or contact one of the committee co-chairs listed on Page 1.

We are defining the next era for the College of Charleston. We need your advice and counsel.

Sincerely,

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Core Purpose and Values

Foundations for the Future

The Strategic Planning Committee is working with a specific planning process based on a six-year Stanford research project by Jim Collins and Jerry Porras published in *Built to Last*.

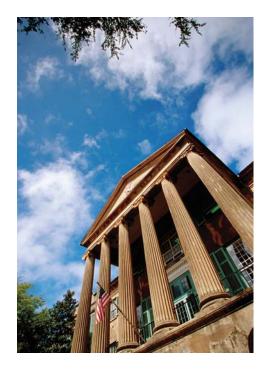
Integral to this process is an ongoing discussion of the institution's core purpose and values.

"Core purpose ... is the organization's fundamental reason for being ... when properly conceived, purpose is broad, fundamental, and enduring; a good purpose should serve to guide and inspire the organization for years, perhaps a century or more" (Collins & Porras 224, 76–77).

"Core values are the organization's essential and enduring tenets – a small set of timeless guiding principles that require no external justification; they have intrinsic value and importance to those inside the organization" (Collins & Porras 222).

Using this model, the committee reviewed past and current mission and vision statements, core value statements, and strategic plans to ascertain our "essential and enduring ... guiding principles" and "fundamental reason for being."

From its beginning, the College existed to benefit society as well as the individual.



CORE PURPOSE

• To pursue and share knowledge through study, inquiry, and creation in order to empower the individual and enrich society

Core Values

- Educational Excellence that furthers intellectual, creative, ethical, and social development through a broad range of programs centered on the liberal arts and sciences
- Student-Focused Community that embraces mutual respect, collaboration, and diversity for the welfare of the individual and the institution
- The History, Traditions, and Environment of Charleston and the Lowcountry that foster distinctive opportunities and relationships that advance our public mission in the city of Charleston, the state of South Carolina, and the world

The Charter of 1785 establishing the institution noted that "the proper education of youth is essential to the happiness and prosperity of every community."

In the centuries since our founding, the meaning of a proper education, the characteristics of the student body, and the definitions of prosperity and community have changed considerably. The curriculum has expanded from classical studies to include a wide variety of arts and sciences and professional offerings at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The College has evolved from a local institution to one that encompasses people and programs from all over the globe.

As we build on our past and envision our future, we welcome your help in further refining these statements of core purpose and values. You may provide feedback and comments on the strategic plan website at strategicplan.cofc.edu or by contacting one of the co-chairs of the Strategic Planning Committee: Amy Thompson McCandless at 843.953.1436, Jim Deavor at 843.953.8095 or Sue Sommer-Kresse at 843.953.3130.

Environmental Scan

Responding to Our Environment

The purpose of the environmental scan was to allow the College of Charleston to understand and respond effectively to changes in its environment. It was divided into the following five areas.

KEY FINDINGS

Education Trends

South Carolina students have a lower level of post-secondary attainment than the U.S. average.

College of Charleston faculty and students are less racially diverse than at other S.C. colleges and universities.

The percentage of male students attending the College falls below the national average.

The BS/BA degree represents a 34 percent increase in annual earnings over a high school diploma.

The College is competitive with new hires but is in jeopardy of losing experienced faculty whose salaries are well below national averages.

A significant portion of the College's roster faculty are 55 or over, creating the potential for large numbers of retirements in the near future.

Demographic and Economic Trends

Populations of S.C. and the U.S. will grow at a similar pace while South Atlantic states will grow at almost double this rate.

The Hispanic population will continue to grow rapidly.

South Carolina ranked 44th in the nation in per capita personal income in 2005. The S.C. figure of \$28,212 was considerably below the U.S. average of \$34,495.

Rising energy and medical costs will consume both state revenue and personal income at greater and greater rates, limiting the revenue streams available to higher education.

The Port of Charleston is rated by customers as "the most productive container port in the world" according to readers of World Trade.

Charleston is second for mid-sized metropolitan areas in Entrepreneur Magazine's list of "Hot Cities for Entrepreneurs."

Research and Technology Trends

Students will expect professors to be as flexible and adept at electronic communication as they are.

Students are showing up on campuses with more electronic devices and expecting technical support for them all.

Building green industries, such as wind and solar energy, public transit, zero-emissions buildings, etc., will provide millions of jobs in the U.S. and internationally.

There is a low level of research and development in S.C., especially related to new and emerging industries.

According to the Charleston Regional Development Alliance, Charleston has "clusters of innovation" in the aviation/aerospace, advanced security, automotive, biosciences, and creative industries.

Political and Legislative Issues

Congress has become much more interested in issues related to higher education's affordability and public accountability.

The percentage of state support for the budgets of public universities is declining rapidly.

Growing public concern over affordability and recent legislation will make major increases in tuition challenging to achieve.

There is a significant focus on issues related to K–12 education and its financing by state policymakers.

Cultural, Social, and Environmental Trends

Despite income in Charleston and S.C. remaining below national averages, the cost of living mirrors the national average.

American Style ranks Charleston sixth among mid-sized U.S. cities as a top arts destination.

Cultural attractions and the natural environment are important variables in the Lowcountry lifestyle.

There is an enduring concern for historic preservation and a growing concern for protection of the environment.

Competitive Analysis Executive Summary

Competitive Advantages and Challenges

In December 2007, the Competitive Analysis Subcommittee was given the charge to "examine other higher education institutions in the state, region, and nation with similar purpose and core values to ascertain the nature of their programs and resources and to determine our competitive advantages and challenges."

CASTING A WIDE NET

The committee decided to cast a wide net in considering peers, utilizing four different peer groups that have been employed in other College activities.

- Admission Overlap Group: Top 30 institutions with whom we compete for students
- COPLAC: 23 institutions that are members of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges
- Delaware Study: 24 institutions participating in this study used to set faculty workload targets
- Faculty Salary Study: 22 institutions used for the College's faculty salary study

In all, 81 institutions in the U.S. were studied, 68 of which are public institutions.

The College of Charleston ranked in the middle of the group in many key characteristics, ranking 34th of 81 in total student enrollments, and 37th in total operating budget.

The analysis focused on five key areas:

- Admissions
- Academics
- Graduate Programs
- Finances
- Campus Characteristics

Admissions

The College of Charleston has an academically strong admissions profile, with high school grade point averages ranking in the top half and SAT scores ranking in the top third.

The strength of the academic profile is reflected in an admissions acceptance rate more selective than peer institutions.

Evidence from student surveys, however, suggests that the strength of our academic programs is not as important to our entering students as it is to students at other public institutions.

Scholarships and financial aid were examined as a subsection of admissions. The College of Charleston offers significantly less merit-based financial assistance to incoming students than our competitors.

Unlike many of our peers, the College has no full scholarships.

The College ranks near the bottom for non-need-based gift aid awarded to out-of-state students and offers few tuition abatements. The lack of merit awards for out-of-state students has led the College to serve disproportionately the economic elite. Need-based aid is comparable to peer institutions, but the College has significantly fewer students with financial need. The lower yield rate of accepted applicants suggests that we are not competitive in scholarship and aid packages.

ACADEMICS

The strength of the admissions profile is complemented by a low student/faculty ratio and a high tenured-faculty percentage.

The graduation rate, however, is only average and thus is not consistent with other strengths that place the College in the top third of the peer group.

Two significant challenges were identified – the retention rate of students is very low compared to peers and the use of part-time faculty is unusually high.

Graduate Programs

Evaluation of graduate programs presented a special challenge as comparative data were difficult to obtain.

Graduate tuition for both in-state and out-of-state students is higher than average, but some pricing flexibility exists.

The College of Charleston ranks in the top quarter of masterslevel institutions in size of graduate-student enrollment and the ratio of graduate-to-undergraduate enrollment is near peers.

Competitive Analysis Executive Summary

Competitive Advantages and Challenges

The College, however, has a very low percentage of full-time degree-seeking students, suggesting that opportunities exist in this area.

The College is not competitive with South Carolina public research institutions in the number of tuition abatements that are offered.

While the College places at the top in research expenditures among master's institutions, we are not competitive with research institutions.

Finally, the College of Charleston offers very few graduate programs compared to peer institutions.

FINANCES

The College of Charleston receives significantly less state funding per student than our peer public universities.

We are much more tuition dependent than peers, and both in-state and out-of-state tuition rates are in the top third of the peer group. Some tuition pricing flexibility exists, but other longterm sources of revenue are needed, especially to support new initiatives.

The ratio of full-time equivalent enrollment (Fall 2006) to endowment assets for the College is \$5,221, compared to Clemson University and USC-Columbia, which have ratios of \$8,553 and \$13,445, respectively.

In considering expenditures for personnel, the College makes significantly higher use of part-time faculty and staff than other institutions.

The College faces a particular challenge in the area of clerical and secretarial staff positions. Compared to other institutions, the College has an unusually small percentage of such positions, compounded by very low salaries.

Overall, salary levels for faculty and staff are below average and benefits expenditures per employee place the College in the bottom quarter of the peer group.

CAMPUS CHARACTERISTICS

The College of Charleston has a higher percentage of traditionalaged and female students than peer institutions. The student body lacks the diversity found at other peer institutions.

A low percentage of our students live on campus relative to our peers.

Smaller Peer Group Recommended

After completing a full study of 81 peer institutions, the subcommittee recommended adopting a more limited peer group for strategic planning purposes.

The recommended group includes institutions from all of the sample groups except COPLAC. No COPLAC institutions were recommended as peers.

COMMITTEE-RECOMMENDED PEERS

- Appalachian State University
- Boston College*
- Clemson University
- The College of New Jersey
- Elon University*
- James Madison University
- Miami University
- Rowan University
- University of North Carolina Wilmington
- University of South Carolina
- University of Vermont
- Wake Forest University*
- Western Washington University
- The College of William and Mary

*private institution



Focus Group

What Changes Are Necessary?

The Focus Group Subcommittee and the Office of Accountability, Accreditation, Planning, and Assessment (AAPA) conducted 35 focus group meetings with 289 individuals – including students, administrators, business and community leaders, legislators, alumni, faculty, and staff – to solicit their ideas for improving the College. An online version was also available and received approximately 100 responses.

Below is the process used for each focus group:

- Prior to each session, participants were asked to submit their response to the following question: From your perspective, what improvements in the College of Charleston are necessary for it to be recognized as a world-class institution?
- Participants were asked to limit their responses to five different ideas for improvement and to keep their answers succinct.
- During the focus group session, participants had a copy of the group's collected responses in front of them and on flip-chart paper around the room. No names were given for individual responses.
- Each group discussed the list of responses as well as any new ideas that arose from the discussion.
- Similar ideas were combined and summarized into major themes.
- All participants had the opportunity to speak and fully share their thoughts.
- Group members individually voted on and ranked the top five improvements necessary for improving the College.
- The rankings were tallied and a "Top Five" list for the group was generated.

Most Consistent Findings (in rank order)

1. Finances (648 total comments)

Across all focus groups and all constituencies, financial concerns were paramount. This included a variety of sub-issues, including increasing the endowment, having more money for scholarships and salaries, growing our resources, enhancing funding to attract top-quality and diverse faculty and students, and increasing the graduate-program funding.

One student suggested, "We need to examine the scholarship structure – there should be full scholarships, mid-level scholarships, and low-level scholarships."



An alumni group member said, "If we could get some major corporate donors, it would help us enlarge our endowment."

2. Student Issues (306 comments)

The second most popular concern was student issues, including student demographics (e.g., improve the quality of incoming students and limit enrollment), student support services, and student engagement.

"Student development and advising need to focus on pursuing and providing extraordinary professional opportunities for extraordinary students," said one alumna.

"We need to significantly improve our 4- and 5-year graduation rates," said a faculty member.

3. Faculty/Staff (270 comments)

The third concern in the Top Five was faculty/staff issues. This included reducing teaching loads and the student to faculty ratio, hiring "stars," and increasing the quality of faculty-student interactions.

"Find a world-renowned faculty member/researcher and bring him/her to the College. Build a program/identity around the 'star,'" stated one participant.

An Academic Council member said, "World-class faculty will create world-class students; we must have innovative pedagogy."

A retired faculty member suggested, "To attract the best faculty, we must offer competitive salaries and, most importantly, competitive start-up packages for the support of the initiation of scholarship by new faculty."

Focus Group

What Changes Are Necessary?

4. Marketing/Public Relations (256 comments)

This category included a desire for more public recognition of student accomplishments and better public relations and internal/external marketing, in addition to changing the attitude of faculty and staff to that of a world-class institution.

"We need a marketing campaign to students and families in the Lowcountry that highlights our accomplishments and future goals and lets them know how they can be part of the College," said one staff member.

An alumnus stated, "Until the best in the world know about the College, they won't know to come to the College."

5. Diversity (163 comments)

Related concerns were expanding diversity programming, increasing student diversity, making the College more

international, and acknowledging and repairing our reputation and history.

A faculty member said, "Given the place where our school is located and the history associated with this place and this institution, it only makes sense that we take advantage of the rich resources available to us. The College could become a leader in African American Studies in the southeast, which would increase our national visibility as well as help us recruit and keep African American faculty and students."

A staff member said, "We need greater diversity in both faculty and students. We know many students of all races and persuasions leave because they are uncomfortable with the homogeneity of the student body."

"Top 5" Across All Participants

Issue	Faculty	Students	Staff	Alumni	Retired Faculty	Friends	Academic Council
Finances	1	2	2 (tie)	2	1	1	4
Student Issues	5	5		1	4	3	
Faculty/Staff Issues	2		3		3	4	2 (tie)
Marketing/PR		3	4	3		2	
Diversity		1					5
Facilities	3		5	5	2		
Academics	4			4			2 (tie)
Infrastructure			2 (tie)				3
School Spirit		4					
Identity/Who are we?							1
Collaboration/City Relationship					5	5	

Friends includes School of the Arts Council, Cougar Club Board, Neighbor Association, Parent Advisory Council, Foundation Board Academic Council includes the Provost's office and the deans

SWOT ANALYSIS College SWOTs En Masse

The SWOT Subcommittee's charge was to discover the perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of individual units and the College.

The subcommittee's web-based system allowed 123 identified academic and administrative units from across campus the opportunity to provide responses.

Significantly more responses were entered in the Strengths and Weaknesses categories than in the Opportunities and Threats categories.

Subcommittee members merged similar responses into subsets within the four categories and nine areas. This process reduced the 4,535 entries to a more manageable set of 255 summaries, including 71 Strengths, 109 Weaknesses, 51 Opportunities, and 24 Threats.

Major Themes

The individual entries were combined into nine composite areas: academics: education, academics: scholarship, administrative infrastructure, environment, financial resources, human resources, physical infrastructure, reputation, and technology. From these areas, subcommittee members produced a list of the "Top Five" themes, shown on the next page.

Added Value

"In addition to providing valuable information for the strategic planning process," said Simon Lewis, chair of the SWOT subcommittee, "we consider the SWOT analysis to have been a valuable exercise because units have had a great opportunity to discuss within the unit what direction they should be headed in. Regardless of whether or not particular issues make it into the final strategic plan, units can use their own individual SWOT analyses to guide their progress. We feel the deans and heads of divisions will find the process to have been of enormous value."

Deans and provosts presented SWOT reports to the SPC.







Dean John Newell







Dean Frances Welch

STRENGTHS

Attributes of your unit and/or of the institution that contribute to the success of the College

Weaknesses

Attributes of your unit and/or of the institution that are harmful to the College

OPPORTUNITIES

External conditions that are helpful to achieving the objective of your unit and/or of the institution

THREATS

External conditions that are harmful to achieving the objective of your unit and/or of the institution

SWOT Analysis

Top Five

STRENGTHS

- 1. Faculty & Staff The College has a dedicated, caring, and highly collaborative community of faculty and staff who guide students to success.
- 2. Education The College is built on a foundation of highquality, respected academic programs that provide an excellent education in the liberal arts and sciences and solid preparation in professional areas.
- 3. Reputation The College enjoys an increasingly strong overall institutional reputation, both regionally and across the nation.
- 4. Campus The beautiful and historic nature of our physical campus, combined with the ongoing enhancement and development of our facilities, is one of the College's core strengths.
- 5. Academics Many of the College's academic departments excel in scholarship in comparison to departments at similar institutions.

WEAKNESSES

- 1. Money The most commented-upon weakness was a lack of money to support both units and individuals.
- 2. Administration Many units perceived a lack of support from institutional leadership.
- 3. Space/Building Maintenance/Antiquated Systems In general, units noted a lack of integrated space to do their work properly or to expand into in response to increasing demand. There was an expressed need for more smart classrooms, better technology, more up-to-date technology, and updated systems.
- **4. Diversity** A lack of diversity among students and faculty is seen as hurtful to the College.
- 5. Weak Communication Communication between service units and academic departments as well as between the upper administration and the rest of the College results in misperceptions, poor service, and a limited ability for units to plan.

Opportunities

- 1. Location The unique location and place of the College offers countless opportunities that are beneficial to individual units and the College.
- **2. Internationalization** Opportunities exist to internationalize programs at the College and advance those which already have an international component, such as study-abroad programs.
- 3. Financial & Human Resources There are significant fundraising, networking, and involvement opportunities. Our successful alumni and good community relationships could assist students in internships, job placement, and mentoring.
- 4. Technology Many units across the College believe The BATTERY Project and other technological advances can transform the College's business and educational functionality.
- 5. Education Units suggested ways to expand, clarify or consolidate the curricular and scholarly mission of the College.

THREATS

- 1. The Economy The effects of weaknesses in the local, regional, and national economies combined with the high cost of living in Charleston threaten the College's ability to attract and retain the highest quality students and faculty.
- 2. Funding Diminished state funding and lack of a significant endowment, support, and other resources from external sources compromise programs and our ability to recruit students.
- 3. Disasters Natural and man-made disasters threaten the well-being of the institution.
- **4. Reputation** Attitudes and misperceptions about the College jeopardize our reputation.
- 5. Environment Local and regional attractions and resources, while seen as strengths from one perspective, are also seen as threats that can be viewed as distractions and competition.



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